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New York

Chair: Mr. Tevi ..... (Vanuatu)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

General debate (*continued*)

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): At the outset I wish to extend our warmest congratulations to you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau, as well as the Chairs of the two Working Groups, as you assume the stewardship of the 2016 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I would also avail myself of this opportunity to commend the tireless efforts of Ambassador Fodé Seck in his capacity as Chair of the Disarmament Commission at its 2015 substantive session and the important work carried out by the two Chairs of the Working Groups, Kazakhstan and Morocco. I would like to thank Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his statement this morning (see A/CN.10/PV.355), which provided useful insights into the contemporary issues in disarmament. We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

We are at a historic crossroads. As the second year of the 2015-2017 cycle of the United Nations Disarmament Commission commences today, disarmament has assumed an unprecedented degree of importance in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). The 2030 Agenda seeks to build peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, targeting "significantly reduc[ing] all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere". Disarmament plays a pivotal role in achieving the objective of building peaceful and inclusive societies, as envisaged in the global development agenda. It is our fervent hope that the much-needed resources to achieve sustainable development could be diverted from armaments globally to that end. In this context, Sri Lanka attaches great importance to the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

We reaffirm the centrality of the Commission, with its universal membership, as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament apparatus that considers specific disarmament issues and submits concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. It is imperative that the Commission achieve concrete results in the current UNDC cycle, a task which the Commission has not been able to achieve for the past 15 years or so. This would require a demonstration of the requisite political will and flexibility on the part of Member States.

The need to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction is now more urgent than ever. Sri Lanka's commitment to the elimination of the threat posed by nuclear weapons is reflected in international treaty obligations we have undertaken in the field of disarmament. It is our belief that a transparent, sustainable and credible plan for multilateral nuclear disarmament is required in order to achieve the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In this regard, all States have an obligation to negotiate in good faith to achieve the objective of total elimination of nuclear weapons.

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Strengthening the disarmament treaty regime is essential to ensuring rule-based regime for nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we wish to recall and reiterate our support for the key recommendations made by the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission in 2006, specifically the paramount value of multilateralism and the overall importance of treaties and international law in reaching the goal of disarmament. In this regard, we wish to reiterate the centrality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including the 2010 NPT Action Plan and the 13 practical steps to disarmament agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and the importance of adherence to all other principal legal instruments in this field.

As the international community continues to be confronted by the spectre of terrorism, with the increasing threat of the destabilization of established States, the danger of nuclear material falling into terrorist hands and its unthinkable consequences demand our urgent attention. The starting point for international efforts to confront this danger would be the widest possible adherence to, inter alia, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the strengthening of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material by the early entry into force of the 2005 amendment to the Convention.

Sri Lanka has long held the view that outer space is a part of the common heritage of humankind and that all people should have an equal opportunity to explore and utilize it for peaceful purposes and for the common benefit of all through cooperation. We consider that, while space exploration and the utilization of outer space and its environment offer ample opportunities to humankind, they also bestow on the space actors the responsibility to keep the space environment free from conflict and prevent it from becoming an arena for the arms race.

We recognize that the existing legal framework on outer space, as represented by the Outer Space Treaty, needs to be strengthened, since the political climate concerning outer-space sustainability and security has changed drastically. The militarization and potential weaponization of the space environment have underlined the danger of outer space becoming a contested area and a source of future conflict. We believe that the conclusion of an international agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space would contribute to averting a catastrophic effect on humankind.

As we work towards our shared objective of a world free of nuclear weapons, we would also like to highlight the importance of disarmament education and research. In this regard, we wish to commend the work carried out by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). It is vital that the work of UNIDIR be supported by as broad a representation of Member States as possible in order for the Institute to effectively carry out its unique mandate.

Regional disarmament mechanisms play a significant role in complementing and promoting the global agenda for peace and disarmament. In this regard, we wish to express our satisfaction that the activities carried out by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and to acknowledge its role in promoting United Nations activities at the regional level to strengthen peace, stability and security. We are grateful to the Government of Nepal for its support for the Centre to operate from Kathmandu. We believe that it is imperative for the Regional Centre, in keeping with resolution 70/65, to move its operations back to Kathmandu from Bangkok, where the Centre was temporarily relocated following last year's earthquake, as soon as possible.

Sri Lanka remains committed to striving with all States and other stakeholders to make nuclear disarmament realizable and bring peaceful uses of nuclear technology within reach. My delegation looks forward to constructive deliberations at this substantive session.

Mr. Moussa (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Chair, allow me on behalf of the Ivorian delegation to extend to you my warmest and most sincere congratulations on your well-deserved election as Chair of our Commission. I remain convinced that your experience and leadership will be a valuable contribution that will allow our Commission to see progress on the two items inscribed on the agenda for this session. I would also like to express my gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Fodé Seck, and to his team, whose spirit of openness and reconciliation has allowed our work to proceed smoothly in the last session. I would also like to support the statement made by the representatives of Indonesia and Uganda, respectively, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of African States (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

As in previous years, here we are once again, meeting at this annual substantive session to try to make progress on the question of disarmament. In the past few years, this discussion, we should point out, has been characterized by a lack of progress. The stagnation that has affected the work of our Commission affects its relevance and its credibility, making it incapable of providing recommendations to the General Assembly, in accordance with the mandate that was entrusted to it since the first United Nations special session on disarmament.

While we can derive satisfaction from the drastic reduction in nuclear warheads and other weapons of mass destruction since the end of the Second World War, the threat of nuclear weapons to our planet remains undeniable. That is why nuclear disarmament in all its forms must be a priority.

The impasse that we have seen in the work of the Disarmament Commission and even in the Conference on Disarmament has had repercussions on all of the forums in which the nuclear issue is discussed. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, for example, though open for signature since 1996 and ratified thus far by 164 States, has still not entered into force. In this respect, we call upon annex 2 States, whose ratification of the Treaty is indispensable, to show flexibility and to step up their signature and ratification process.

My delegation believes that the swift conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty, specifically regarding enriched uranium and plutonium, should contribute significantly to progress in the debate on disarmament. Likewise, the adoption of a general convention on nuclear disarmament would be an unprecedented success for our planet.

The year 2015 has given rise to the hope that any negotiation, no matter how complex, could, with the political will of States, lead to concrete results. The agreement on the Iranian nuclear issue shows that certain avenues exist and that, with trust on all sides, the world can make great progress.

Aware of the humanitarian repercussions that could arise from the use of nuclear weapons, my country hopes that the example of Africa, which was declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone, as was Latin America, will be followed by other continents and regions. Accordingly, my Government encourages the States of the Middle East region to step up their efforts to conclude an agreement. It is clear that the objective of nuclear disarmament does not supersede the legitimate right of non-nuclear-weapon States to receive firm and legally binding security assurances, as well as the legitimate right of all States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in particular in the areas of agriculture and health.

Experts note that small arms and light weapons claim more than 700,000 lives every year. This figure clearly reveals the scope of the harm caused by this type of weapon to humankind. That is why my delegation is closely following the adoption of confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons. Indeed, my country, which has experienced a crisis for over a decade, is in a position to understand the harmful consequences of the circulation of and illegal trade in small arms and light weapons. The experience of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in Côte d'Ivoire has taught us that with political will and with the assistance of international partners, it is possible to effectively combat this phenomenon.

At the regional level, the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, adopted in 2006, was the result of an exemplary collective political process, allowing States in the region to cooperate effectively against the illicit trade in these weapons. My country would like to take this opportunity to thank Japan and the United Nations Development Programme for their support for the national marking and tracing process. My delegation would like to recall that the new technologies used in the manufacturing of light weapons must ensure that marking and tracing remain, as we have said on several opportunities in our discussions.

With respect to the Commission, my delegation shares the interest expressed by my predecessors in revitalizing our work. From our point of view, it is not so much a question of procedure as of serious differences on topics of common interest. Flexibility in defending our interests must be the attitude that we should adopt, with a view to achieving effective compromises, especially when it comes to new challenges, such as the introduction of weapons in outer space as well as new cybernetic and information technology capabilities. Despite the real obstacles our negotiations face, we must be optimistic about the future. Only by doing so will we be able to ensure that multilateralism will prevail.

In addition, the adoption, after more than 20 years of negotiations, of the Arms Trade Treaty, as well as the agreement on the Iranian nuclear issue that I mentioned earlier, are very meaningful examples of how questions linked to disarmament can be resolved through political and peaceful means. It is therefore not too late to overcome our differences and restore trust among us, so that we can reach satisfactory solutions that are accepted and shared by all.

Mr. Napolitano Martinez (France) (*spoke in French*): Sir, I wish to convey to you my congratulations on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at this second session of its current cycle. I hope it will create a positive, constructive and pragmatic impetus. I want to address a few points with regard to France's position.

The past year since the last session of the Disarmament Commission has been marked by undeniable successes but also by unacceptable developments in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. Let us begin with the successes.

First of all, the Vienna agreement reached in July 2015 between the E3+3 and Iran finally paved the way to a sustainable solution to the Iranian proliferation crisis. The agreement, endorsed by Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), limits the Iranian nuclear programme for the long term, closes off all pathways to access to an atomic weapon and establishes a robust verification system. It can be a success for diplomacy only if it is respected by all parties. France will see to that.

Next, we should mention the success of the fourth Nuclear Security Summit only a few days ago, where over 50 Heads of State reiterated their commitment to strengthening the security of civilian facilities for storing and transporting fissile materials in order to avoid terrorist risks. Moreover, the tools of conventional disarmament grow stronger each day. The Arms Trade Treaty today has 130 signataries, and over 80 States are already parties to it. We must maintain and bolster our efforts with a view to universalizing the Treaty and ensuring that the rules it contains become the general rule for all.

Throughout various meetings, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has, for its part, reinforced the certainty and common understanding regarding the threat posed by the illicit trafficking of these deadly weapons. We trust that, in the lead-up to the sixth Biennial Meeting of States Parties in June of this year, the international community will rise to the challenges posed by this threat.

Finally, with regard to outer space, the adoption by consensus of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities and the constructive discussions that took place last year on a code of conduct for outer space activities underscore the fact that the subject, as mentioned earlier, is now ripe for an expanded discussion. My delegation, in that respect, is open to the inclusion of an item on this subject in our work this year.

This past year, there have also been missed opportunities, most notably, at the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which was unable to reach a consensus document. The absence of the agreement should not make us forget the Treaty's centrality to the non-proliferation system, to our collective security and to the security that it has brought us since its entry into force in 1970 and subsequently, since its extension in 1995. We also regret that the many initiatives proposed by a number of States within the Conference on Disarmament were unable to unblock talks in that crucial forum to move forward disarmament negotiations.

Finally, there have been unacceptable developments this year. Since the start of 2016, North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test in January; in February, it carried out a launch using ballistic missile technology, under the guise of a space launch, in violation of several Security Council resolutions, thereby threatening the stability in the region. Moreover, it has conducted ballistic missile launches since then, further heightening tensions in an already unstable region. The Security Council, through its adoption of resolution 2270 (2016) and its unprecedented strengthening of sanctions, has thus sent a clear message to Pyongyang that the international community will no longer tolerate such wilfulness.

Moreover, the use of chemical weapons in Syria remains a source of grave concern for my country. Their use has continued despite Security Council resolutions, and these taboo weapons have become common currency in the conflict. Major doubts hanging over the sincerity of the Syrian authorities in their declarations

to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons also pose the risk of the proliferation of those weapons. Those responsible for their use must be brought to account. To that end, we in the Security Council have created a joint investigative mechanism, a neutral organ independent of the United Nations tasked with identifying perpetrators. We eagerly await its results. The use of missiles against civilians during the conflict has only heightened our already grave concern. Unfortunately, all the foregoing elements are only a few examples of the uncertainty that defines our strategic and security context today and that cannot be ignored when discussing genuine disarmament.

In the nuclear sphere, which I would now like to discuss briefly, the NPT is, as I have already stated, the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the bedrock of our disarmament efforts. As already mentioned by a number of speakers, the nuclear-weapon States as defined by the NPT must honour their obligations under the Treaty. France is aware of its responsibilities as a nuclear-weapon State. When it comes to nuclear disarmament, France's record is exemplary. The irreversible dismantling of our nuclear testing site and the equally irreversible dismantling of our fissile-material-production facilities for weapon-production purposes, the dismantling of the land component of our deterrent and the reduction of one third of our maritime and airborne components are examples that reflect how seriously France takes its commitments. Our balance sheet is one of action, not just words.

We must also strengthen the other aspects of the multilateral framework and induce all States that have not yet done so, including those of annex 2, to join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We hope that the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty this year will help us reactivate the impetus with a view to its entry into force. We must also negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons in the Conference on Disarmament. France has submitted a proposal, and the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on this subject, which was adopted by consensus, is an important part of building trust in this area in order to finally achieve a treaty. These two subjects are the two priorities of my delegation when it comes to nuclear issues and the next stages in which we need to make progress.

Lastly, I would like to mention in this regard the polarization of positions and statements on nuclear issues, which has unfortunately prevented us from breaking the deadlock. This polarization is not only sterile, but I fear that it also plays into the hands of those who are happy with the status quo. On the contrary, my delegation would prefer to have a peaceful, constructive and realistic debate. That is the only thing that can help us move forward towards genuine disarmament in the real world.

Let me conclude by reiterating my delegation's support and the assurance that France will participate constructively, pragmatically and realistically in the Commission's work in the hopes of being successful.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): On behalf of the United States delegation, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the Government of Vanuatu, on your election to the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at its 2016 session. We look forward to working with you, Sir, as you ably discharge your important duties. We also congratulate the other members of the Commission's Bureau for their elections to date. And let us express our appreciation to Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his compelling presentation this morning (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

In April 2009, President Obama laid out his vision for a world without nuclear weapons and his agenda for reducing nuclear dangers. The President made clear that while global nuclear disarmament was a long-term, generational project, there are steps that we can take today to create the conditions for achieving this shared objective of the international community.

In support of this agenda, just last week, President Obama hosted the fourth Nuclear Security Summit, in Washington, D.C. These Summits have contributed measurably to international security, spurring concrete actions to decrease highly enriched uranium and plutonium stocks, improve security measures for safeguarding nuclear facilities and transporting nuclear materials, and strengthening capacity to counter nuclear smuggling. Through the Summit process, the international community has also strengthened the international organizations, institutions and multilateral legal instruments that make up the global nuclear-security architecture and improved coordination among them. In the post-2016 approach to nuclear security, we will look to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations, INTERPOL, the

Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism to contribute to the sustainability of the Summit process, through the implementation of the individual institutional action plans that the leaders adopted on 1 April.

Also of note, on 16 January the IAEA verified that Iran completed the nuclear-related steps it committed to under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The nuclear deal will ensure Iran's nuclear programme is and remains exclusively peaceful by cutting off all of Iran's pathways to enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon and by putting in place the inspections and transparency necessary to verify that Iran is complying with the deal.

For its part, the United States is committed to our Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) commitments, including with regard to article VI. Despite the lack of a final document at the 2015 NPT Review Conference, statements at the Conference demonstrated overwhelming and deep-seated international support for the Treaty and for its enduring contribution to international peace and security. The 2020 Review Conference will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty, and it will be important, substantively and symbolically. We look forward to working with all States parties as preparations for the 2020 Review Conference get under way.

Our bilateral nuclear-reduction efforts with the Russian Federation are an essential part of our comprehensive, full-spectrum approach to nuclear disarmament. The United States stockpile today is 85 per cent lower than it was during the Cold War high. Three years ago, in June 2013, in Berlin, President Obama stated the willingness of the United States to negotiate with Russia a reduction of up to one third of our deployed strategic weapons from the level established in the New START Treaty. That offer is still on the table. Progress requires a willing partner and a conducive strategic environment.

In the multilateral realm, most recently at the Conference on Disarmament (CD), we have proposed a creative compromise to begin long-delayed negotiations on a global treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. In any such CD negotiations, all issues would be on the table for discussion and all national equities would be protected by the principle of consensus. An in-force fissile-material treaty and Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty would impose quantitative and qualitative caps on nuclear-weapon stockpiles, which in turn would help to set the foundation for the world without nuclear weapons that all of us seek to establish. In making our latest fissile-material proposal in the CD, we earnestly tried to take the stated concerns of all CD member States into account. Our proposal has received strong support from many CD member States and also remains on the table.

In pursuing nuclear disarmament, the United States embraces a realistic and practical approach. We can never separate disarmament from the global security environment or strategic stability considerations or divorce it from our security commitments to friends and allies. Progress on nuclear disarmament will not be made by ignoring the security imperative of retaining a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent for as long as nuclear weapons exist.

In seeking to build support for realistic and practical measures for nuclear disarmament, it is clear that more genuine dialogue between the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States is needed. That is one reason why in Prague, in December 2014, Under Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller announced a new initiative by the United States to form an International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. The Partnership is composed of both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, and is being implemented in collaboration with the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI).

The Partnership builds on prior efforts, such as the United Kingdom-Norway Initiative, which began in 2007, by seeking practical solutions to both future arms control and disarmament technical challenges. We thank both nations for their pioneering efforts in this exciting work. The Partnership aims to build capacity in the field of nuclear-disarmament verification, for without such capacity, global nuclear disarmament will never be achieved. The Partnership is also furthering understanding of the complexities inherent in nuclear disarmament verification and monitoring. For example, under the New START Treaty, inspection activities are focused on delivery vehicles. But in a future agreement, we are likely to be focused on individual warheads, which is a new and difficult challenge. The Partnership offers international leadership by

facilitating technical progress to address the challenges of nuclear-disarmament verification.

In March 2015, the partners agreed to establish three working groups: one on monitoring and verification objectives, one on on-site inspections and one examining technical challenges and solutions. The Partnership's three working groups met for the first time in Geneva in February to continue their work. In Geneva, more than 80 experts from 20 countries participated in the working groups' discussions. The working groups developed a simple scenario involving the dismantlement of a notional nuclear weapon, the related inspection of that dismantlement by a team of experts representing the interests of all participating States, and the related technologies that could support such an inspection. This scenario allows the three working groups to coordinate and focus their efforts and develop common understandings of the challenges and potential solutions associated with nuclear-disarmament verification. The working groups' terms of reference, which provide the framework for these groups to continue to pursue their technical discussions and work, are posted in their entirety on the State Department's and NTI's websites. Partner countries will receive an update from each working group at the start of the next plenary, and we are grateful to Japan for agreeing to host that meeting in June.

Last year, the Commission embarked on its 2015-2017 agenda by focusing on two long-standing topics: in Working Group I, chaired by Kazakhstan, recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and in Working Group II, chaired by Morocco, practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. We thank both Working Group Chairs for their leadership to date and look forward to working with them again this year.

As we all know, these particular topics have been on the Commission's agenda for a number of years, and, regrettably, success in forging consensus recommendations on either subject has continued to elude us. Last year, both Working Group Chairs drafted serious, though non-consensus, texts for our ongoing consideration. From the United States perspective, while none of these documents in their current state are perfect and each needs more work, we feel that each represents a reasonable basis for further deliberations.

As we have noted in this Commission since April 2014, the United States is committed to the stable, sustainable and peaceful use and protection of outer space to support the vital interests of all nations. In this regard, the United States was pleased to co-sponsor, with Russia and China, resolutions 68/50, 69/38 and 70/53. All three resolutions refer the recommendations contained in the 2013 consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189) to the UNDC for consideration, and all three resolutions were adopted by the General Assembly without a vote. As the Commission progresses, we feel that the it should establish a working group to address the preparation of recommendations to promote the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities.

In the end, our ability to make headway in this body will depend on how prepared delegations are to exhibit flexibility and practice compromise. Given past disappointments here, we are under no illusions about the challenges before us. We simply need to keep trying and to try harder. This Commission is an important element of the United Nations existing multilateral disarmament machinery and is worthy of such efforts. The United States pledges to do all that it can to find a viable way forward for the work of this Commission.

Mr. Sandoval Cojulún (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, we would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election to steer the work of the Disarmament Commission.

We align ourselves with the statement to be made by the delegation of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and the statement made by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.355). However, in our national capacity, we would like to make some specific comments related to the work of the Commission.

As the specialized deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament machinery, the Disarmament Commission offers us the opportunity to discuss specific disarmament issues with a view to making concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. However, for over 15 years the latter has failed to fulfil its mandate, and consensus continues to elude us. We hope that this cycle will provide new

momentum to this important body and allow us to emerge from the political impasse, which has made it impossible to adopt recommendations.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, in recent years we have seen notable optimism and renewed interest on the part of many States to move towards a world free of nuclear weapons, despite the failure of the last Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the paralysis of the disarmament machinery. We are encouraged by the dynamism of the international community in advancing a position that makes it clear that we will not wait for a small group of nuclear-weapon States to determine when and if we will achieve nuclear disarmament.

We welcome the inclusion of the initiative of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in the debate at the United Nations, through several resolutions adopted during the last substantive session of the First Committee. In that regard, the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which were held in Oslo, Nayarit and most recently in Vienna, have been instrumental in launching this debate and anchoring it within the multilateral disarmament agenda, and we are proud of the endorsement of the Humanitarian Pledge by CELAC member States, which was announced at the end of the last Conference. This shows that our region remains at the forefront of the fight against nuclear weapons.

Our region was also the first densely populated area to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Non-nuclear-weapon States must remain steadfast and recall that nuclear disarmament is everyone's responsibility, not just that of a small number of nuclear-weapon States. We must show that we will not waver in our firm commitment to complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament and that we are committed to filling the legal gap that currently exists in the prohibition of nuclear weapons, as we have done with all other weapons of mass destruction.

We welcome the first session of the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations, established by resolution 70/33, which was recently held in Geneva. The working group seeks to find concrete solutions to help us overcome the current impasse. It also shows that, far from being discouraged, we consider the failure of the last NPT Review Conference to be serving as a collective impetus for an increasingly vocal majority and one which is increasingly less willing to be content to repeat the same commitments in the hope that this time we will see progress.

We do not see it as a parallel measure or an attempt to undermine the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime, as some have alleged. It is worth recalling that the objective of the NPT — the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime — is the total elimination of nuclear weapons and not to safeguard the consensus or to preserve the status quo indefinitely.

The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and is an essential foundation for nuclear disarmament. We must accord equal attention to the three pillars of the Treaty: nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We must also pay attention to the fact that they are all closely related and mutually reinforcing. As a State party to the NPT, we are committed to promoting its universality and full compliance with all of its provisions. It is clear that non-nuclear-weapon States have fulfilled their part of the commitment. Now it is up to nuclear-weapon States to do the same.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an essential component of nuclear disarmament. Guatemala is proud to be part of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first inhabited zone free of nuclear weapons and served as an example and inspiration for creating other nuclear-free regions. Therefore, my delegation welcomes the convening of the Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, which took place in New York on 24 April 2015. Given the unacceptable risk that the very existence of these weapons poses to humanity, we consider it essential to maintain the moratorium on nuclear testing until the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enters into force.

On the subject of practical measures for confidence-building in the field of conventional weapons, we believe that they are an indispensable tool for relieving and dispelling tensions and for preventing the escalation of conflicts or crises between countries. Given the current situation, transparency and confidence-building have proven to be valuable tools in multilateralism, and it is essential to move

forward in our work to find how to further improve these measures.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is the first legally binding instrument that seeks to significantly reduce the human cost of arms proliferation worldwide, preventing arms suppliers from taking advantage of the weakest point in the legal supply chain of weapons and keeping such weapons from being diverted into the illicit market. It sets out the responsibilities of each actor in the chain. Guatemala signed the Treaty shortly after it was opened for signature, and our Congress ratified it on 26 January. We hope to deposit the instrument of ratification soon.

We are proud of our recognized leadership on this issue in our region. We have supported the Treaty from the start and worked hard for its adoption. We congratulate Mexico on having hosted the first Conference of States Parties and for all its work as the Provisional Secretariat of the Treaty. At the Conference, important decisions that will affect the implementation of the Treaty in the years to come were adopted, and while we are disappointed by some of them, we are encouraged by the fact that together, we have given the Treaty solid foundations, such as the rules of procedure and of financing. Although we are aware that it is not a perfect treaty, it has the potential to make a real difference in terms of ensuring that exporting and importing countries, as well as transit countries, operate under the same norms. It could also be an important tool in the fight to eradicate illicit arms markets.

My delegation also wishes to reiterate its commitment to the full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its monitoring mechanisms. We note with concern the lack of progress that has been made despite the fact that we adopted final documents both during the Review Conference and during the fifth Biennial Meeting of States. In addition, we are concerned at the trend whereby success is measured by achieving a consensus, in that, when consensus is achieved rather than making real progress, enabling this important instrument to develop and ensuring its continued relevance, "consensus" has become a de facto veto used by some to prevent the Programme of Action from evolving and adapting to new realities and challenges, such as synergies and complementarities between the Programme of Action and ATT, or the issue of ammunition.

We welcome the particular attention to the illicit flow of ammunition in the latest report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons and fully agree with the recommendation to consider new approaches to curbing these trends. They could have an immediate effect on the intensity of armed violence, and the report recognizes, in fact, that the real value of small arms depends on "the uninterrupted supply of ammunition" (*S/2015/289, para. 11*). We hope that the sixth Biennial Meeting of States, to be held in New York in a few months, will make progress on these issues.

Guatemala strongly condemns the use of cluster munitions by any actor and under all circumstances, which is a violation of the principles enshrined in international humanitarian law. Guatemala reaffirms its commitment to contributing to the effective implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and notes with satisfaction the holding of the First Review Conference of the Convention in Dubrovnik.

Finally, we hope that this three-year cycle of deliberations will address substantively the two items on its agenda as two mutually reinforcing objectives.

Mrs. García Guiza (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. You have the full support of my delegation as you exercise yourfunctions as Chair.

Mexico remains committed to nuclear disarmament, a subject of the first resolution of the General Assembly, resolution 1 (1), 70 years ago, which remains the unfinished business of the Organization. The General Assembly at its seventieth session adopted four resolutions co-authored by Mexico that have changed the dynamics of and approach to addressing nuclear weapons. Two of them — resolutions 70/47 and 70/48 — underline the need to prohibit and eliminate these weapons due to humanitarian consequences that could stem from accidental or intentional detonation. The third, resolution 70/50 , through which the General Assembly stigmatizes nuclear weapons, declares them inherently immoral, and the fourth, resolution 70/33, which established an open-ended working group whose first meeting was successfully held in Geneva as a forum for substantively addressing effective legal measures for achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons.

The majority and strong support these resolutions received cannot go unnoticed by the United Nations and, in particular, by the Disarmament Commission. This support demonstrates the urgency with which the international community demands concrete progress in nuclear disarmament and expresses the frustration of much of the membership with regard to the paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament, which has been unable to fulfil its mandate for two decades, thereby preventing regulatory development of international law. The Disarmament Commission finds itself in the same moribund situation today, after 17 years of not producing substantive recommendations, having become a forum for reiterating positions with a view to preserving consensus.

The great failure of the ninth Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons nevertheless had a single positive element — it showed the existing unity among nearly the entire membership for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons so that they will never again be used under any circumstances.

In the field of conventional weapons, the picture is a little more encouraging. The Arms Trade Treaty represents a historic milestone in strengthening the international legal structure of control of transfers of conventional arms. Mexico wishes to again express its gratitude for the trust and commitment of all stakeholders, which enabled the success of the Conference of States Parties to the ATT held in my country, which provided an opportunity for fundamental decisions on building institutional and procedural aspects of the Treaty regime to be adopted. Mexico will continue working for the universality and effective implementation of the Treaty at the national and regional levels.

Mexico welcomes the successful holding last year of the first Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Dubrovnik. The Political Declaration and Plan of Action adopted without a vote on that occasion, provide the ideal platform for activities to be carried out during the next review cycle of the Convention, with a view to achieving the Convention's universality and full implementation. Mexico has argued that multilateral forums should promote — and not hamper — the deliberations and decision-making processes. We hope that the work of the Disarmament Commission at this session will enable it to fulfil its mandate.

Mr. Kazi (Bangladesh): I am delivering this statement on behalf of my Ambassador and Permanent Representative.

Mr. Chair, my delegation joins others in congratulating you on your election to lead the 2016 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. We appreciate your personal efforts, Sir, and those of the Chairs of the two working groups in preparing for this session. We hope that the first session of the current triennial cycle augurs well for its desired outcome and helps to break the spell that has made tangible results of the Commission's work rather elusive over the past many years.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We share the observations of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs that, while there has been an array of developments in recent times on the issue of conventional weapons, the nuclear disarmament agenda has been characterized by a growing polarization of positions leading to protracted deadlocks and resulting frustrations. There is, however, a broad-based understanding that the status quo of nuclear disarmament front is far from desirable, leading to the creation of complementary or alternative platforms, even when they fall short of garnering political support across the board. While the reality and efficacy of such platforms cannot be denied altogether, we agree with others that the Disarmament Commission remains the sole deliberative body with universal membership for building and fostering consensus on critical issues in the areas of general and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament.

The forward-looking pronouncements made at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament in 2013 make us believe that there is sufficient political will to take forward the nuclear disarmament agenda in parallel with the pursuit of nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. But what is perhaps missing is the leadership and courage to translate political will into demonstrable results in action. It remains to be seen whether the increasingly volatile security situation around the globe can prove to be enough motivation for reinvigorating the disarmament machinery as a whole, including the Disarmament Commission.

Bangladesh subscribes to the notion that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation need to be pursued with matching priority if we are to have a world free of nuclear weapons. Their sustenance and the proliferation of nuclear arsenals continue to pose grave threats to all of humankind and undercut the universal, comprehensive and ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted last year (resolution 70/1). The line drawn between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation may serve the purpose of *realpolitik* that would continue to drive a wedge in our collective efforts to achieve total elimination of nuclear weapons in a complete, transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner.

The absence of a mutually reinforcing agenda on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation would also continue to retard the overarching pursuit of general and complete disarmament. Bangladesh therefore sees merit in the work on developing appropriate legal measures provisions and norms through inclusive and participatory multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations. In a similar vein, we reaffirm our support for initiating negotiations on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, as envisaged by the General Assembly.

Bangladesh also recognizes the humanitarian and ethical dimensions being brought to bear upon the question of nuclear weapons. The growing awareness of the international community of the humanitarian consequences of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons should duly inform the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission. Outside the Commission, Bangladesh would encourage further reflection on the possible implications of the use or threat of use of nuclear arsenals on the sanctity and inviolability of the provisions of international humanitarian law.

Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, non-nuclear-weapon States deserve legally binding assurances from nuclear-weapon States on refraining from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them. This remains a priority consideration for Bangladesh in the context of the draft programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament and the overall multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations.

We acknowledge the crucial role played by nuclear-weapon-free zones in advancing the negative-security-assurance agenda as well as the twin objectives of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It is a matter of regret that the bold vision set out in this regard in the programme of action adopted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament has largely been relegated to an outdated agenda, especially in certain parts of the world. It is also perhaps a missed opportunity for the world that the political commitments articulated with regard to advancing the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty have failed to gain much transaction in real terms.

Bangladesh strongly believes in compliance with the essential safety, safeguard and security measures designed to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including for accelerated development in developing and least developed countries. In our national capacity, we shall continue to further deepen our cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and other relevant international partners in building our capacity for such compliance.

With regard to conventional weapons, Bangladesh closely follows and participates in the work in relation to the Arms Trade Treaty. Our political leadership remains positively disposed towards our possible ratification of the Treaty, following our signature in 2013. We are currently looking into possible means for enhancing our capacity for compliance with the Treaty provisions, including under the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Bangladesh will continue to participate in existing confidence-building and transparency measures, including the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

We appreciate the international community's enhanced attention to preventing the illicit transfer of arms and such transfer's possible interface with violent extremism and terrorism. We remain concerned over the growing use, inter alia, of improvised explosive devices targeting civilians and United Nations peacekeepers. We underscore the need for increased support for developing and least developed countries, including the troop-contributing countries among them, to build the capacity of their concerned agencies or units to counter such threats.

Despite the perceived impasse in the Disarmament Commission, we continue to harbour high hopes for its potential and look forward to sustaining its relevance by further enhancing the breadth and quality of its substantive outcomes. We hope that the positive

dynamics we witnessed in the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament last week will also help create momentum in the Commission's work towards making the current triennial cycle break some new ground in the United Nations disarmament agenda. Bangladesh would remain unwaveringly committed to that objective.

Mr. Manongi (Tanzania): Allow me to join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), as well as the other members of the Bureau, on their deserved election.

We also align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Uganda on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.355).In addition, I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

We believe that the Commission is meeting at a time when a number of global challenges continue to demand its attention and indeed action. It is in this context that the General Assembly has called for a results-oriented discussion in the Commission's work. Such an outcome is essential in strengthening international peace and security. Nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons remains a matter of significant concern to the United Republic of Tanzania. It is our firm belief that nuclear risks, including nuclear accidents or strategic miscalculations, pose an enduring threat not only to States but also to humankind.

We continue to reject the false logic that somehow nuclear weapons are a guarantee of peace. For our part, we have never felt at peace on account of the nuclear arsenals held either by our friends or their allies. In an unstable global environment, where some non-State actors increasingly seek the elimination of Governments, there is no guarantee that such heinous actors would not resort to whatever means they can lay their hands upon.

The Commission has a responsibility it cannot evade if it is to sustain its legitimacy and relevance. The General Assembly has called on the Disarmament Commission to examine and make recommendations on the various problems in the field of disarmament and to promote the implementation of the decisions it takes. Recommendations to the General Assembly for decisions or actions need to be made, and the primary task in that regard rests with the Commission. We therefore wish to reaffirm our belief in the relevance and centrality of the Disarmament Commission as the sole, specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery.

We note with concern, however, that the Commission has not submitted any substantive recommendations to the General Assembly in the course of the past 15 years. The inability or unwillingness of the Commission to propose credible recommendations to the General Assembly illustrates a deeper sense of mistrust in promoting our collective goals and aspirations. Regrettably, this lack of progress undermines our purported commitment to disarmament and stands in the way of any meaningful progress.

In the meantime, we continue to recognize the ever-present danger of nuclear weapons and reiterate the importance of achieving total and irreversible disarmament. We see the use of such weapons as having nothing other than catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences. We endorse the call for full adherence of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and underscore the importance of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Pending the elimination of all nuclear weapons, we renew our call upon all nuclear-weapon States to provide unconditional and legally binding security assurances against the use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances, including in the context of the nuclear-weapon-free zones instruments.

In terms of reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation, we note the following. First, nuclear facilities must be safeguarded within or above the highest degree of systematic safeguards set forth by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Secondly, there is a right to the use of peaceful nuclear technology, as its vast potential for social and economic development must be preserved. In addition, we recognize the existential threat posed by weapons of mass destruction to the peace and security of our nation, our continent and our global community, especially if they were to fall in the hands of non-State actors. We therefore call on States to take appropriate steps to prevent groups, such as terrorists, from acquiring weapons of any kind.

In conclusion, we also reiterate our concern regarding the threat presented by the trafficking of

conventional arms. The regulation of conventional arms is of the utmost importance to preventing conflicts, the displacement of people and increased poverty in conflict areas. In that regard, Tanzania signed the Arms Trade Treaty on 3 June 2013 and strongly supports the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In the same vein, we wish the proposed agenda items for the upcoming sixth Biennial Meeting of States to include the following two items: first, the joint and simultaneous operations between Member States as a contribution to curbing illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and secondly, enhancing information-sharing among Member States on the prevention of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Sir, allow me to offer my congratulations and that of my delegation on your election to chair the Disarmament Commission. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I also take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representative of Senegal, Mr. Fodé Seck, for his service as Chair at the last session, which laid the basis for the current Commission cycle. I would also like to welcome the presence of and briefing by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, this morning (see A/CN.10/PV.355), and thank his entire team for their work and dedication.

The delegation of Argentina fully associates itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Dominican Republic tomorrow on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. Notwithstanding the foregoing, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to briefly make a few comments in our national capacity to add to these deliberations.

At a time when we have made progress in defining the objectives of sustainable development for the post-2015 period, we cannot and must not overlook the work ahead of us in relation to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The Disarmament Commission has not been outside of the crisis that has affected the disarmament machinery. Nevertheless, the deliberative nature of the Commission makes it a forum where, on the basis of dialogue, we can overcome the current deadlock that has been in place for more than a decade. In that regard, we would like to stress the value of dialogue within the framework of the Commission, beyond the progress that we can achieve in this second year of the cycle on the consideration of the agenda items. Given the importance of the two topics under consideration by the Commission, frank dialogue in this deliberative forum will enable us to move forward on nuclear disarmament and build confidence with respect to the objectives of transparency, cooperation and peace that drive all of us without distinction.

For Argentina, the Disarmament Commission is a forum of interest worth maintaining and kick-starting to the greatest extent possible. Accordingly, we call upon all delegations to combine their efforts and adopt a pragmatic approach with a view to ensuring that this session of the Commission is productive. To that end, Mr. Chair, you can count on my delegation's full cooperation.

Mr. Mminele (South Africa): At the outset, I would like to join other delegations in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at this year's substantive session. We also extend our congratulations to the Chairs of the Working Groups on their respective elections. My delegation is looking forward to working with them to make this session a success.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Uganda and the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of African States and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.355). In my national capacity, allow me to make a few general remarks on the two agenda items before us, which my delegation is looking forward to discussing in detail during the thematic debates.

South Africa remains committed to multilateralism as the best tool to deal with issues affecting international peace and security. In this regard, it is South Africa's considered view that the United Nations Disarmament Commission provides an inclusive platform for deliberations on critical issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The UNDC has in the past made valuable contributions to our work in the field of disarmament and international security and we call on all delegations to show the flexibility needed to allow this body to fulfil its responsibilities. The fact that the Disarmament Commission has not made any progress since 1999 has become a growing concern. It is my delegation's hope that the discussions and deliberations during the next two weeks will be based

on genuine political will and good faith and that we will be able to make progress.

At the general debate of the seventieth session of the General Assembly in September 2015, President Zuma spoke as follows about the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to adopt an outcome document:

> "The failure of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to reach an agreement at the 2015 Review Conference — in the year that marks 70 years since the first atomic bombs were detonated in Japan — is a major setback to our commitment to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons" (*A/70/PV.14, p. 9*).

This major setback only serves to amplify the lack of progress in the fulfilment of nuclear obligations and commitments by the nuclear-weapon States in particular. South Africa reiterates its call upon the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals and engage in negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament, in compliance with their legal obligations under the NPT, as well as through the implementation of the various undertakings contained in the 1995, 2000 and 2010 final documents.

Notwithstanding this disheartening reality, South Africa welcomes ongoing discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which was established pursuant to resolution 70/33 and which met in Geneva in February 2016. My delegation looks forward to actively participating in the upcoming sessions of the Working Group, as it represents yet another opportunity for all Member States to make their voices heard on this important subject. My delegation wishes to encourage other Member States to also actively participate in this process. We can no longer be complacent about the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament.

With regard to conventional weapons, South Africa remains fully committed to the ongoing implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as one of the few instruments we have at our disposal to ensure that conventional weapons are traded in a transparent manner and that the devastating impact of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is not allowed to flourish. In this regard, my delegation urges all Member States that have not submitted reports on their arms transfers to do so urgently.

Furthermore, my delegation wishes to reiterate the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the role it can play in reinforcing the importance of transparency in the conventional arms trade. In addition, my delegation is pleased to note the progress that is being made to ensure that the ATT Secretariat is fully operational, as was reflected in the final report of the Extraordinary Meeting of States Parties to the ATT, held in Geneva in February 2016.

In closing, my delegation looks forward to thematic debates and stands ready to participate actively during discussions and to work with all delegations towards achieving consensus during this session.

Mr. Tsymbaliuk (Ukraine): On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your respective elections. We look forward to continued discussion on recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Ukraine consistently supports a multilateral approach to the disarmament and international security agenda. While recognizing the difficulties in the implementation of existing international treaties and in bringing new ones into force, as well as the deadlock in the disarmament negotiations, we fully reaffirm our commitment to maintaining and strengthening the current disarmament machinery and international cooperation in order to reinforce the existing international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

We share the view that the use of nuclear weapons is the most serious threat that humankind faces today. Ukraine considers the total elimination of nuclear weapons to be the only absolute guarantee against the scourge of nuclear warfare and supports the call for the immediate adoption of a comprehensive international agreement banning nuclear weapons. Pursuing this goal, my country has taken a proactive approach and set a pattern to follow by abandoning its nuclear capability and acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in November 1994, as well as by taking concrete steps in March 2012 to eliminate the use of highly enriched uranium for civilian purposes

through the removal of all existing stocks from its national territory.

At the same time, after Ukraine's decision to renounce its nuclear weapons, the Russian Federation occupied part of our territory on the artificial and groundless pretext of protecting the Russian-speaking population. It is needless to say that this occurred in grave violation of the imperative norms of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements, including the well-known Budapest Memorandum, which ensured the territorial integrity of Ukraine, the inviolability of its borders and the principle of non-interference in Ukraine's domestic affairs.

Ukraine is concerned by the accelerated militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the Donbas region, which further undermines international security and regional stability. Moreover, Ukraine is deeply concerned by the steps Russia has taken towards the deployment of nuclear weapons on the currently occupied territory of Crimea. The Russian occupiers are completely restoring the Soviet-era nuclear storage facilities and have already deployed the means of delivering nuclear weapons, such as warships and combat aircraft. To facilitate this activity, Russia may go even further by installing uranium-enrichment facilities, organizing the production of dual-use materials and applying technologies linked to nuclear weapons on the peninsula. The implementation of these plans would directly infringe the non-nuclear status of Ukraine and further undermine the international non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regimes.

The occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the ongoing Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine have left Ukraine without due control of its national system to regulate its nuclear sites and the materials located there. In these circumstances, we cannot prevent illicit trafficking and the malicious use of such materials by terrorists. As a result of Russian aggression, Ukraine cannot resume control over more than 400 kilometres of its border. Those sections of the border can be used by traffickers to illegally transfer radiation sources from Russia into Ukraine and further into Europe. Recent reports from Ukrainian law enforcement agencies demonstrate that this is a real scenario.

Even while under Russian aggression, Ukraine has remained a reliable partner and continues to fulfil its obligations under the NPT as a non-nuclear State. Ukraine continues to regard the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and provides comprehensive support to ensure its effective implementation, further strengthening and universalization. At the same time, we proceed from the understanding that the only way to protect the world from nuclear proliferation is to make Ukraine an example by way of its successful renunciation of nuclear weapons. Otherwise it will become much more difficult to convince any other country to refrain from developing a national nuclear programme.

Since the provisions of the Budapest Memorandum have been totally ignored by the Russian Federation, to which it is a signatory, we continue to call on the Conference on Disarmament to urgently develop and conclude a multilateral, legally binding instrument in order to provide security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

While emphasizing the importance of the implementation of the decisions taken at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, Ukraine would like also to support the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We consider the convening of a conference on that issue to be a priority task, the successful implementation of which would increase regional and international security and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

In that context, we also encourage universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), whose entry into force will constitute a tangible stride towards attaining the noble objective of a safe and peaceful world free of nuclear weapons. It is of the greatest importance that the integrity of the norms set out by the CTBT be respected. While I do not downplay the importance of the ongoing voluntary moratoriums on nuclear-weapon tests, which are highly valuable, they are no substitute for a binding global ban. In that regard, we call on the relevant Member States to urgently ratify the CTBT.

Ukraine continues to support the development of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system and calls on all NPT parties that have not yet done so to conclude and strictly implement comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA, as well as the additional protocols. In that regard, we condemn Russia's seizure of Ukraine's nuclear facilities

in Crimea because violent acts of this type impede the implementation of IAEA safeguards on the peninsula.

We also continue to insist that negotiating and concluding the fissile-material cut-off treaty (FMCT) will be essential both to constrain nuclear proliferation and to advance the goal of nuclear disarmament. Ukraine strongly calls for finding common ground on the issue of existing fissile material stocks and the immediate commencement of negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Addressing the enormous destructive power of conventional armaments remains of utmost importance to the international community, especially in the context of regional security. Foreign military aggression against Ukraine with the use of the regular military forces armed with modern types of conventional armaments and ammunition has significantly damaged the existing system of arms control and reduction of conventional forces. The idea of conventional disarmament has also been discredited.

I would also remind the Commission of the illegal transfers of conventional arms from the Russian Federation to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the Donbas region of Ukraine. Despite the international community's demand to stop such aggression, the Russian Federation continues to dispatch large amounts of weaponry into the territory of Ukraine, thereby deliberately upsetting not only subregional security and stability but that of all of Europe. Such a situation is intolerable.

Ukraine remains a devoted advocate of the efforts within the United Nations system and at the regional level to address the illicit small arms and light weapons issue in all its aspects. In that regard, we expect the substantial outcome of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held 6 to 10 June in New York City.

In conclusion, we would like to wish the Chair every success in his future work and reiterate our full support to that end.

Mr. Nagao (Japan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and the members of the UNDC Bureau on their election. I assure you and the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

The UNDC was once renowned as the leading deliberative body of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. However, for about 16 years now it has remained in deadlock. Although Japan will continue to actively participate in the UNDC, all of us here should be aware that the lack of substantive outcome in this body has put its raison d'être into serious question, and we should cooperate to find a way to revitalize its work.

Looking back on the recent situation of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Japan is concerned that, as a result of discussions on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and effective measures on nuclear disarmament, the rift between the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States seems to have widened. Japan has consistently stated that to promote nuclear disarmament, practical and concrete measures based on cooperation between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States are necessary.

Japan ascribes importance to the following measures, among others, as practical and concrete measures: first, enhanced transparency of nuclear forces; secondly, deeper reductions in all types of nuclear weapons by all States that possess them and eventual multilateralization of negotiations to reduce nuclear weapons; thirdly, early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); fourthly, the early commencement and conclusion of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and fifthly, promotion of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

With regard to the CTBT, since last September Japan, together with Kazakhstan, has been a coordinator for facilitating the entry into force of the CTBT. Japan will continue to strongly call for the early ratification of the CTBT by all States listed in annex 2, and to work to facilitate the CTBT's early entry into force. All moratoriums on nuclear testing must be maintained, pending the Treaty's entry into force.

We believe that nuclear disarmament must be promoted on the basis of two understandings: a clear understanding of the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons and an objective assessment of the reality of the security situation. Japan, more than any other

country, fully and directly understands the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. In this regard, Japan been working very long and hard to spread across borders and generations awareness of the reality of the devastation that occurred in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to deepen such understanding. Awareness of the catastrophic humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons fundamentally underpins all nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

In terms of security, despite the repeated calls of the international community, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test in January and launched ballistic missiles in February and March. This series of provocations in a short period of time seriously undermined the peace and security of North-East Asia and of the entire world. They are serious violations of relevant Security Council resolutions and the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks of September 2005. Furthermore, they represent a serious challenge to the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Therefore, Japan wishes to lodge a serious protest against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and strongly condemns its nuclear tests and missile launches. Japan reiterates its strong demand that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea immediately and fully implement relevant Council resolutions, in particular the most recently adopted resolution 2270 (2016), and other commitments. Such a severe security environment must always be taken into consideration in promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

As a basis for promoting the concrete and practical nuclear-disarmament measures based on the aforementioned two understandings, it is imperative that the NPT regime be maintained and strengthened. In order to for that to happen, it is vital that a meaningful outcome be achieved at the 2020 NPT Review Conference. Seizing every opportunity, Japan will devote its utmost efforts to that end in the context of the 2020 NPT review process, which will start next year.

This year, Japan holds the presidency of the Group of Seven (G-7) and will host the meeting of G-7 Ministers for Foreign Affairs in Hiroshima on 10 and 11 April and the summit meeting in Ise-Shima in May. Making the most of these opportunities, Japan will work to make progress in realizing a world free of nuclear weapons.

Addressing the enormous damage caused by conventional arms continues to be of utmost importance to the international community. It is an area in which United Nations leadership is needed. Japan has been supportive of the great role the United Nations has played in this field. In that regard, I would like to refer to two significant challenges that Member States will need to confront in the coming months.

First, Japan considers it very important to ensure that the Arms Trade Treaty is effectively implemented and universalized. We would like to encourage all Member States to join and ratify the ATT. As one of the original sponsors of resolution 61/89, which set the ATT process in motion, Japan will actively work with other Member States and civil society to achieve the effective implementation of the Treaty.

Secondly, the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will provide an important opportunity for the United Nations efforts make progress in tackling the enduring problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Japan highly commends Ambassador Rattray, Chair-designate of the sixth Biennial Meeting, for the transparent and efficient manner in which he has been conducting preparatory work for the Conference in June. Japan will continue to engage actively in order to achieve a successful outcome at the sixth Biennial Meeting.

Last but not least, in order to make a positive impact on the United Nations disarmament machinery, now is the time for us to consider ways to revitalize the UNDC so that it can produce beneficial guidelines and recommendations on disarmament and non-proliferation, in accordance with its original mandate. To that end, Japan will continue to provide all possible support to the Chair and contribute to productive deliberations in this important body.

Ms. Sehayek-Soroka (Israel): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, upon your assumption of the chairmanship and assure you of my delegation's support in the fulfilment of your duties.

The importance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) in the context of the disarmament machinery was outlined in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978 (resolution S-10/2), where it

was stipulated that the function of the UNDC would be, inter alia, to consider and make recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament and consider elements of a comprehensive programme for disarmament. It is clear that in order to fulfil its mandate the UNDC needs to look at issues in a comprehensive manner and in context.

Israel supports a vision of a Middle East free from war, hostility, weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. It is a vision that all of the region's inhabitants should aspire to, based on the hope for peace, mutual recognition, reconciliation and cessation of all acts of terrorism, aggression and hostility. At the same time, Israel believes that arms control and disarmament processes are inseparable from the context in which they exist. They need to be built on confidence-building measures that are durable and sustainable and must be formulated in a way that addresses the relevant circumstances, challenges and threats prevailing in the region. Those processes cannot be dissociated from the problematic surrounding environment that gives rise to them.

Since our last deliberations, the Middle East has been further destabilized and radicalized. The erosion of State sovereignty has never been so apparent. Territories that in the past have been under the control of central regimes are now being contested or overrun by terrorist groups to which those territories have been ceded or abandoned. In today's Middle East, chemical weapons are, unfortunately, still in use. While we recognize that the removal and destruction of the Syrian regime's declared chemical weapons was indeed an important and significant achievement, we are concerned by the erosion of the absolute prohibition against the use of chemical weapons and the evolution of a more lenient norm on our borders — one which includes the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime not only prior to its accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention, but also after undertaking that obligation. We are also concerned about the maintenance of residual capabilities and as the expansion of use of chemical weapons to other non-State actors and areas.

Iran remains the most significant threat to the security of the Middle East and beyond. Its recent ballistic missile tests indicate that the threat posed by Iran has not diminished — quite the contrary — and they signal its attitude towards fulfilment of its international obligations. Iran's agreement with the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany (P5+1) provides it, inter alia, with continuous economic relief, which enables the Iranian regime to further increase its support for terror organizations by providing them with additional advanced weapons. Even after the agreement between Iran and the P5+1, Iran's Supreme Leader declared that he remains committed to seeking Israel's destruction and avowed no moment of serenity for Israel until its destruction. Iran's clandestine activities in the nuclear domain in the past and its continuing acts of concealment and duplicity, taken together with its policy of aggression and hostility, raise fundamental questions as to whether regional players understand fully the duty to comply with international legal obligations.

Against this troubling backdrop, it is clear that no arms control or disarmament process can be detached from reality. Israel believes that a more secure and peaceful Middle East requires all regional States to engage in a process of direct and sustained dialogue to address the broad range of regional security challenges in the region, which include all of the challenges and threats that the region faces individually and collectively. Such a dialogue, based on widely accepted principles of consensus, can emanate only from within the region and must address the threat perceived by all regional parties in an inclusive manner, with a view to enhancing and improving their security. Direct engagement, combined with trust and confidence-building, provides the essential basis for creating a new security paradigm in a region fraught with arms, wars, conflicts, disintegration of national territories and human suffering.

Accordingly, Israel participated at a senior and authoritative level in all of the five multilateral meetings held in Switzerland to discuss the arrangements and conditions necessary for convening a conference on establishing the Middle East as a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and by that, attested to the importance that Israel ascribes to the need to redefine a new regional security paradigm for the Middle East. Despite Israel's positive attitude towards continued engagement and the positive response of the Israeli public to an invitation to participate, the sixth round of consultations was postponed several times and did not take place due to the disengagement of Arab States and others, leading to the halting of the process.

In 1999, at its fifty-fourth session, the UNDC issued a report (A/54/42) enumerating many important elements that contribute to the necessary foundation

for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The report clarifies that such a complex and sensitive security architecture should be the product of the specific circumstances of the region concerned, emanate exclusively from the States within the region concerned and be pursued by all States of the region. Furthermore, such a zone needs to be based on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned.

Israel views the threat caused by the proliferation of conventional weapons as critical and is aware of their possible mass effect. Israel individually and in collaboration with other stakeholders is actively working to counter this menace through the implementation of UNDC resolutions, international norms and standards, and national tools and mechanisms. The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons In All Its Aspects, together with the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, is an important tool in combating the illicit trade and diversion of arms.

Israel welcomes the successful meeting held in New York in June 2015 on the International Tracing Instrument and is looking forward to the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action, to be held this year, as these deliberations and exchanges of views are important to the whole process. More than ever, the challenge of diversion and illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons requires our concerned attention and efforts.

Israel welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty in December 2014. As a signatory State, Israel supports the goals and purposes of the Treaty, acknowledges the remarkable developments that occurred in the international sphere through the creation of this important agreement and looks forward to the second Conference of States Parties, to be held this coming August. In addition, we look forward to engaging further in the preparation for the Review Conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, scheduled for December of this year. We are particularly interested in the Review Conference's anticipated in-depth treatment of the issue of improvised explosive devices and lethal autonomous weapon systems.

Israel continues to believe that direct dialogue addressing the broad range of security challenges among the regional parties is key to any meaningful, consensual discussion on this matter. For its part, Israel will continue to seek such a meaningful regional discussion that could lead to a more peaceful and secure Middle East.

Mr. Zamora Rivas (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of El Salvador would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at this substantive session, and we also extend our congratulations to the members of the Bureau. We also wish to associate ourselves with the statement to be made by the delegation of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, while adding some considerations and views particular to my country.

El Salvador remains firm in its commitment to and support for initiatives for the promotion and strengthening of disarmament, international security and the culture of peace at the global level. We believe that they are essential tools for achieving a global community without danger of weapons that threaten the livelihood of all peoples. That is why we see in the meetings of the First Committee an opportunity to continue pursuing that goal, and to achieve a world free of armament threats.

The Republic of El Salvador supports actions aimed at strengthening disarmament and non-proliferation as well as efforts to renew the international community's commitment to advance towards the definitive elimination of weapons of mass destruction through multilateral negotiations, in accordance with the principles of verification, irreversibility and transparency, given that, for our country, international peace and security depend not only on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction but also on restrictions and prohibitions on conventional weapons of indiscriminate effect and on the irresponsible use of such weapons.

Allow me to recall that nuclear weapons pose a serious threat to the environment and to the very survival of the human race. This is an indisputable reality, and in this regard we note with concern the lack of concrete action and of pragmatic monitoring of this phenomenon. El Salvador reaffirms the need to move towards the priority objective of nuclear disarmament and to achieve and sustain a world free of nuclear weapons. We therefore express our opposition to the

development of new types of nuclear weapons and the improvement of existing ones.

We also reiterate the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in the strategic doctrines and security policies of all the nations of planet Earth. We express our concern at the humanitarian impact and global effects of any accidental or intentional nuclear detonation. We reiterate the importance of establishing internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones, and we propose as a model the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, which proudly confirmed our region as the first zone to be declared free of nuclear weapons by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

We are aware that recent years have been productive in terms of the development of regulatory instruments in the area of conventional weapons. That is why we welcome the continued implementation of practical confidence-building measures as a tool to alleviate and defuse tensions that could lead to an escalation in a conflict between brotherly countries. We therefore urge Member States to continue to use and improve upon these instruments, which have proved their worth by the trust they have generated. In addition, we hope that the Arms Trade Treaty, as a legally binding instrument, can contribute to addressing the consequences that the unregulated trade and the illicit trafficking in weapons have had in many countries around the world.

El Salvador believes that, now more than ever, it is important to strengthen the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), namely, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We acknowledge that this is a critical moment and we express our disappointment at the limited support generated for actions geared towards implementing the Treaty. We are aware of the importance of universalization of the NPT, and that is why we urge States that have yet to do so to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. We also urge the nuclear-weapon States to comply with commitments assumed under article VI of the Treaty, with the sole purpose of moving towards the total elimination of those kinds of weapons.

The Republic of El Salvador reiterates its profound concern at the threat posed to humankind by the continued existence of weapons of mass destruction. We reiterate that the use or threat of use thereof would be a patent violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a crime against humanity, constituting at the same time a clear violation of international law and, above all, of international humanitarian law. El Salvador faces grave security challenges. Like other countries in the region, it is beset by groups on the margins of the law that threaten and use violence as an instrument for achieving their goals. To that end, we believe that the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is a corollary of the actions committed by those groups and poses a grave threat to our security.

The illicit trafficking, accumulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons fuel a culture of violence and impunity. Therefore, we must spare no effort in combating this scourge. Aware that this situation affects the lives of thousands of people in the region and around the world, El Salvador was one of the first 50 countries to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty, thereby contributing to getting this important instrument off the ground.

The problems facing the international community in the areas of development, poverty eradication and eliminating illnesses and disease are directly linked to disarmament. That is why I want to conclude by stating that El Salvador reiterates its commitment to continue working, mobilizing efforts, promoting and participating in international forums that contribute to raising awareness of the grave consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction and the real and imminent threat posed by the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. El Salvador will do its utmost to achieve the priority goal of the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, devoting special attention to taking measures to neutralize the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Ms. Telford (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom consistently champions the United Nations disarmament machinery framework as an essential part of the rules-based international system. The United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary said in his statement to the General Assembly last year (see A/70/PV.18) that Britain has always believed that the stability we seek in relations between nations is best realized through the framework of laws, norms and institutions that together constitute the rules-based international system that was developed after the Second World War, with the Charter of the United Nations at its heart.

The Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee are as relevant today as when they were first created. They are mutually reinforcing. We believe that a reinvigoration of any one of the bodies will have a positive effect on the others. This year, the United Kingdom was pleased to have submitted to the Conference on Disarmament a proposal for a programme of work which remains under consideration.

Since we were last here in this room at the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), we have seen an example of what can be achieved by working together through the rules-based system underpinned by the non-proliferation norm. After more than a decade of tough negotiations, on 14 July, we, alongside our E3+3 partners, agreed a joint comprehensive plan of action with Iran that imposes strict limits and inspections on its nuclear programme. Our focus is now on the full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The United Kingdom has a strong record on nuclear disarmament and meeting our obligations as a member of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We remain determined to continue to work with partners across the international community to prevent proliferation, to build trust and confidence between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states, and to take tangible steps toward a safer and more stable world, in which countries with nuclear weapons feel able to relinquish them.

We have steadily reduced the size of our own nuclear forces by well over 50 per cent since our Cold War peak. Our 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review confirmed that we will retain no more than 120 operationally available warheads and, by the mid-2020s, we will reduce our overall nuclear-weapon stockpile to no more than 180 warheads, meeting the commitments set out in our 2010 Review. Disarmament verification is a key issue to be addressed if we are to obtain, and remain at, total global nuclear disarmament. This area of work is challenging and demanding, but only through sustained multilateral efforts will the technical and procedural issues of disarmament verification be solved.

We are therefore delighted to be a part of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, working with all the permanent members of the Security Council and over 20 non-nuclear weapon States. Along with this, the United Kingdom is also continuing its bilateral programmes with the United States and Norway. It is important that nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States work together so that in the future verification can take place safely and securely, and provide all States with high confidence in actions taken towards disarmament.

The United Kingdom also supports the goal of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to end nuclear-weapon test explosions. We fully support efforts to develop the verification regime for the CTBT, including early completion and provisional operation of the international monitoring system. We have now reached the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature and we encourage any remaining States that are outside of the Treaty to sign up and make a commitment not to carry out any nuclear-weapon-test explosion or any other nuclear explosion. The entry into force of the CTBT would be a tangible step towards a safer and more stable world, one in which the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons can become a reality.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization demonstrated its value earlier this year by detecting the nuclear test carried out by North Korea. The United Kingdom strongly condemns North Korea's nuclear test as a clear and deliberate violation of a number of Security Council resolutions. North Korea's actions continue to present a threat to regional and international security. The United Kingdom strongly supports Security Council resolution 2270 (2016), adopted in response to these provocations, and endorses and encourages the rigorous implementation of the new measures by the international community.

The United Kingdom supported resolution 67/53, establishing a Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile-material cut-off treaty (FMCT) mandated to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. We continue to believe the outcome of the work of the FMCT Group of Governmental Experts will put the Committee on Disarmament in a more informed position when negotiations begin.

Confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms are an important endeavour and

one which the United Kingdom fully supports. This can be seen in our commitment to confidence-building measures, including annual reporting to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, our transparency reports to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and associated Protocols, and our annual reports to the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The universalization of all those instruments would be a giant leap towards better transparency and confidence in the field of conventional arms. We call on those States not yet parties to such instruments to join them without delay.

The existing overarching framework of conventional arms control and the confidence- and security-building measures, such as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Treaty on Open Skies and the Vienna Documents, contains many effective elements, which we should look to preserve. However, it is clear that the regimes are not functioning optimally and need to be updated to make them fit for purpose in the context of the evolving international security landscape. We will continue to support our partners in their efforts to review those initiatives.

The year 2015 also saw the adoption of some further confidence-building measures. The successful first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), held in Cancún in August, agreed on key decisions that provide a clear direction for the effective implementation of the ATT and its associated transparency. The United Kingdom believes that the ATT provides an effective framework for confidence-building in the field of conventional arms, but like the other instruments just mentioned underscores that its success depends on universalization and robust implementation. We believe that the Treaty has the potential to change the lives of those most affected by the unregulated and illicit trade in arms. The United Kingdom is very proud to have been one of the leading advocates of the ATT from the very beginning. We look forward to furthering this important work as we move towards the second Conference of States Parties later this year. We will continue to provide assistance where possible to those looking to join and implement the Treaty.

Last year, we provided $150,000 to States to sponsor their attendance at the first Conference of States Parties and plan to use the remaining funds to do the same for the second Conference of States Parties. We have also funded projects focusing on coordinating and mapping ATT assistance, technical implementation support and strengthened capacity among Commonwealth States to implement the ATT through a Wilton Park conference.

The United Kingdom remains committed to combating the threats posed by small arms and light weapons, the single most significant contributor to conflicts, violence and crime. We must turn these negative impacts into positive action in order to build peaceful and stable societies. The United Kingdom's priorities include assisting with stockpile management, including surplus disposal by destruction and ensuring better-regulated exports. Our efforts are focused particularly in Libya and the Sahel, where illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is fuelling instability and insecurity.

We look forward to the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to refocus international attention on those areas. The United Kingdom remains resolute in its pledge to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by all explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines. The United Kingdom is fully committed to achieving the goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, including their globalization.

The United Kingdom withdrew all cluster munitions from operational service in 2008 and completed the destruction of its stockpile of cluster munitions in December 2013, more than five years ahead of the schedule set by the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The fourth phase of the Falkland Islands demining was concluded in March 2016, taking the total number of cleared minefields to 35, and the United Kingdom is considering further projects to clear the remaining minefields. In 2015 alone, the United Kingdom's mine-action work in developing countries resulted in the removal of more than 22,000 landmines and explosive remnants of war, released more than 37 million square metres of land, which resulted in people having better access to basic services, increased economic opportunities and improved safety. The United Kingdom's project reached more than 115,000 people through mine-risk education activities. The United Kingdom's projects worked in Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, Iraq and Ukraine to strengthen the ability of national authorities to

manage their own landmine and explosive remnants of war programmes.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom looks forward to successful discussions in the 2016 session of the UNDC.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): I join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and the other members of the Commission's Bureau as well as the Chairs of the Working Groups on their respective elections.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

As the sole specialized body with universal membership in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, the United Nations Disarmament Commission's buried potential needs no further mention. Building on the momentum of the constructive week-long discussions during the recently concluded Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, inclusiveness, focus and the effective use of our time must guide our work here. While we acknowledge that it will not be easy to overcome years of impasse in progress on the substantive items on the UNDC's disarmament agenda, a sense of comfort with the status quo would defeat the purpose of us being here today or for the next three weeks. A successful session will depend on our collective resolve, flexibility and creativity to examine the areas of convergence and improve our working methods while applying the less-is-more approach in our deliberations.

Malaysia is unwavering in its conviction that, despite the failed 2015 Review Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the three pillars underpinning Treaty — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy — must continue to guide our vision of total and complete disarmament. We urge the game-changers in this process to show flexibility and support, pursue good-faith negotiations on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear-arms race at an early date with a view to achieving nuclear disarmament, and create a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international controls. The diplomatic achievement of the adoption of resolution 2231 (2015), which endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between Iran and the P5+1 partners in July 2015, indicates that we can still achieve progress by dropping old habits and negative mentalities in the field of nuclear disarmament.

The year 2016 also marked the twentieth anniversary of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. The opinion delivers a moral argument for the total elimination of nuclear weapons while declaring the legal obligations to pursue nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. We see merit in building on this approach, reiterating the urgency to commence multilateral negotiations on a nuclear-weapons convention.

Malaysia believes that the UNDC should focus discussions on concrete proposals for the elimination of nuclear weapons, such as elements for comprehensive conventions on nuclear weapons, as proposed by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). At the core of the NAM proposal is the joint submission to the General Assembly by Costa Rica and Malaysia of a model nuclear-weapon convention that proposes legal, technical and political elements for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world, which deserves further support. Malaysia stands ready to work with Member States on this initiative, as well as on any other proposals that further our aims to achieve general and complete disarmament through clearly defined timelines.

With regard to conventional weapons, my delegation pledges its full support for the preparatory work leading up to the convening of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in New York in June 2016. Malaysia remains committed to the adoption of adequate and strict domestic laws to effectively control the circulation of and illicit trade in conventional arms. We therefore continue to support confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. We believe, moreover, that the opportunity exists to narrow the gaps among the divergent views of the membership in this area.

While we note the views of several delegations on the breadth of the UNDC's discussions, adding a third item to the Commission's agenda should not detract us from focusing on coming up with tangible recommendations on the current priorities that guide the Commission's work.

In conclusion, Malaysia remains hopeful that Member States will come forward and contribute to an outcome that is action-oriented, sets forth timelines and makes recommendations. We commit our full support and cooperation in this process to you, Mr. Chair, and to the members of the Bureau, as well as to all Member States.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since this is the first time that we are taking the floor allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, for presiding over the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Dominican Republic, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and that delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

At the outset, I wish to refer to the weapons that cause the most harm to humankind, namely, small arms and light weapons, whose proliferation is a serious challenge for our societies. In the case of developing countries, the destabilizing effects of those weapons when they end up in criminal hands are quite well known and have contributed to worsening violence and their use on a daily basis, not only by common criminals but also by transnational organized crime. Peru is determined to combat the situation, and in that regard it has proposed domestically to strengthen its response capacity with the creation, in 2012, of the National Regulatory Entity for Security Services, Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives for Civil Use, with a view to preserving the peace, security and well-being of its citizens.

Externally, we are party to international arms-control regimes. In the Andean subregion, we have been implementing the Andean Plan to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. We are working on drawing up a legal framework for the marking of small arms and light weapons and their munitions. In our hemisphere, Peru is a party to the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials.

Given the concern of the international community over the manufacture, transfer and illicit trade of small arms and light weapons and their uncontrolled proliferation, Peru would like to reiterate its commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. We are aware of the fact that the trafficking and diversion of weapons significantly increases other illicit activities that undermine the implementation of international law, governability and peaceful and safe coexistence for our citizens. That is why we are committed to fully implementing those instruments.

My country attributes particular importance to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), an instrument whose objective is to prevent and eliminate the illicit trade in conventional weapons and prevent their diversion. In keeping with that objective, on 16 February, Peru deposited its instrument of ratification for the Treaty. With this step, Peru will be a State party as of 15 May. With a view to implementing the ATT and with the support of the European Union, we have been developing a set of activities whose objective is to help the sectors that are involved in developing the scope and purposes of the Treaty. We should point out that we have a road map where we have planned other activities that are focused on strengthening capabilities necessary for proper compliance with the ATT.

Nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is also a topic of great interest for my country. In that regard, Peru reaffirms its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the full and equal application of its three pillars. Likewise, we reaffirm the inalienable right of all States to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in accordance with articles I, II, III and IV of the NTP.

Peru also calls for the universalization of regimes to ban weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, I would like to express my gratitude for the work that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has undertaken in recent years. Peru is a party to all the multilateral instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, given that it is one of the pillars of our foreign policy and proof of my country's willingness to achieve international peace and security through complete disarmament. That firm position led Peru to be one of the first States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in November

1997, due to the fact that my country attaches special importance of the Treaty as a key instrument in the framework of international efforts to gradually reduce nuclear weapons and prevent nuclear proliferation. Peru reiterates the importance of its swift entry into force and urges the States in annex 2 of the Treaty to accelerate the signing and ratification process for this instrument.

With respect to the disarmament machinery, my delegation believes that the reactivation of the Conference on Disarmament is a priority that should be addressed, as it is the forum and the ideal body for negotiating disarmament and international-security matters. We have been concerned that in the past few years the member States of the Conference on Disarmament have not been able to reach an agreement on the programme of work for the substantive treatment of its agenda items. My country urges all States members of the Conference on Disarmament to show greater political will in order to guarantee a start to the substantive work through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

Likewise, my country would like to express its gratitude for the work done by Ambassador Fodé Seck of Senegal, Chair of the Disarmament Commission in 2015, to achieve an agreement on the agenda of the Commission for the current three-year cycle. However, we regret the lack of progress within the Commission, and we are concerned that substantive recommendations have not taken shape in the respective working groups. My country believes that this year, under the leadership of Ambassador Odo Tevi of Vanuatu, the Disarmament Commission will be able to find greater political will, flexibility and cooperation from all States.

I would like to refer very briefly to the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is based in my country, due to the important role it plays and the support it provides in helping States in the region to move forward with a set of initiatives in the area of disarmament and confidence-building measures in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, munitions and explosives.

Lastly, I would like to conclude by reasserting the unwavering commitment of Peru to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We have pledged to make our greatest efforts in the work of the Disarmament Commission since we are convinced that the achievements that we can make in this area will help to strengthen international peace and security.

Mr. Begeç (Turkey): We wish to express our sincere thanks to the outgoing Chairman and his dedicated team for their efforts during the last session. We also congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on your respective elections. My delegation is aware of the challenging task that you have assumed, and we assure you of our full support in this session.

We welcomed the presence of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs this morning and appreciate his contribution to our debate. We recognize the important role the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) was assigned to play as the main specialized subsidiary body of the General Assembly on disarmament matters. However, the Commission has not submitted any substantive recommendations to the Assembly in the course of the past 16 years. With each and every substantive session in which it fails to do so, the UNDC's credibility and relevance in the disarmament machinery erodes further.

In the face of the present security challenges, on the one hand, and the new opportunities, on the other, the UNDC now has to take up its original role and fulfil its mandate. Success to that end will undoubtedly depend on the extent to which we can collectively show flexibility. At the beginning of this session, my delegation declares its readiness to support the revitalization of the work of the Commission in its current cycle and the achievement of a consensus that could emerge in this room in that regard.

We believe that the option to expand the agenda should be further explored at future sessions, since an additional agenda item would allow the UNDC to discuss new developments and challenges in the areas of international security and multilateral disarmament. Needless to say, in assessing additional agenda items, our delegation will take into account the principles of relevance, competence and efficiency.

We acknowledge the progress made in the conventional weapons cluster. We hope to see similar progress in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation. At the same time, we are aware of the growing interest in the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament. Yet not only nuclear, but chemical and biological weapons also have humanitarian consequences, and in Turkey we have

been unfortunately witnessing this reality in every chemical weapon attacks that takes place in Syria.

The use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime constitutes a breach of international humanitarian law and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Such a breach cannot be disregarded by the international community. We therefore support the joint work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as the competent international body and the United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in attributing responsibility to the perpetrators. To the same end, we expect the Security Council to implement its resolutions, including 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015). Moreover, as the UNDC is a forum for deliberations on disarmament matters, it should also take this issue under consideration within the confines of its mandate.

We also take the opportunity to underline the need for a focused and result-oriented discussion on the items on the Commission's agenda. Serious consideration should also be given to possibility of reducing the duration of the Commission's substantive sessions.

Before I conclude, I would reiterate our support for you, Sir as well as for the Chairs of the working groups.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker for this meeting.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I remind delegations that, in accordance with the General Assembly's rules of procedure, annex V, paragraphs 9 and 10, the number of interventions in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item. The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting should be limited to 10 minutes and the second to 5 minutes.

Mr. Ibrahim (Syrian Arab Republic): My country condemns the use of chemical weapons and calls for bringing the perpetrators of such horrific acts and the Member States supporting terrorists to justice.

I would like to address the basis of the allegations of the representative of the Israeli regime. It seems that she is trying, to no avail, to distract those attending this meeting from the fact that Israel is the sole and only possessor of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and nuclear weapons in the Middle East. She has also forgotten the historical fact that her hostile regime was the first to use WMDs against civilians in Palestine in May 1948, by injecting the water supply of a Palestinian city with a typhoid agent, according to the records of the International Committee of the Red Cross on that incident. Israel's use of WMDs also targeted Egyptian and Syrian civilians in the years 1947 and 1948 by spreading cholera, as confirmed by journalist Thomas J. Hamilton in a New York Times published on 24 July 1948.

I would also like to address the baseless allegations made in the statement of the Turkish representative. I will not repeat the well-known facts regarding his regime's alliance with terrorists in Syria, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). But I would like to refer him and other colleagues at this meeting to a case presented in December 2015 by the Turkish parliamentarian, Mr. Eren Erdem, a member of the Republican People's Party of Turkey. Mr. Erdem said that ISIS terrorists in Syria received all the necessary materials to produce deadly sarin gas via Turkey and accused Ankara of failing to investigate Turkish supply routes used to provide terrorists with the toxic-gas ingredients.

The Parliamentarian showed the Turkish Parliament a copy of criminal case number 2013/120, which was commenced by the General Prosecutor's Office in the city of Adana, in southern Turkey. The investigation revealed that a number of Turkish citizens took part in negotiations with ISIS on supplying sarin gas. The Adana authorities conducted raids and arrested 13 suspects. However, a week later the case was closed, and all suspects were released and later crossed the Turkish-Syrian border.

The parliamentarian further confirmed that the evidence showed that the Turkish Mechanical and Chemical Industry Corporation was involved, and there were reports that Turkish Minister of Justice, Bekir Bozdağ, was also implicated in the incident. I would like to ask the Turkish representative to allow the Joint Investigative Mechanism to meet Mr. Erdem in Turkey and examine all documents and evidence he presented to the Turkish Parliament.

Mr. Robatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The representative of the Israeli regime's ridiculous allegations against my country are a smokescreen to hide Israel's atrocities committed against the Palestinian people, its continuing violations of Palestinian human rights and its ongoing acts of aggression against Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian people under the

guise of a hypothetical Iranian threat, which is an extravagant deception more than anything else.

Iran is not threatening anybody. We are not threatening to use force. Unlike the Israeli officials, we are not saying that all options are on the table. I wish that those who continue to make threats would read the Charter of the United Nations, which states that, "the threat or use of force" is against international law.

The existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the Israeli regime has foiled all international and regional efforts to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and continues to pose a serious threat to the security of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in the Middle East. That is not only Iran's view; some 120 countries, members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), share that view (see A/CN.10/PV.355). This morning, through the statement of the representative of Indonesia, the NAM States parties to the NPT deplored that Israel is the only State in the Middle East to refuse to participate in the proposed conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as mandated by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. It is worth mentioning that in the NAM statement this morning, the 120 States members of the Non-Aligned Movement referred to the NAM Heads of State and Government's expression of

> "great concern over the acquisition of nuclear capability by Israel, which poses a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States, and [their condemnation of] Israel for continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear arsenals".

I leave it to the representative of the Israeli regime and other delegations in this room to judge whether the account of the 120 countries of the NAM is correct and based in reality, or whether we should believe the Israeli regime's obfuscations and lies.

Mr. Begeç (Turkey): The Syrian regime's open file at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is a loaded file indeed as it concerns Syria's fulfilment of its contractual obligations in the field of chemical weapons, particularly with regard, inter alia, to process and its declarations on stockpiles, which are under investigation. The nature of the regime's declarations on this point have been described by the OPCW representatives as inconsistent and having gaps and discrepancies. In our line of work, we all know what that amounts to, namely, the deliberate submission of false information to an organ created by international treaty and thus to the international community in general. Therefore, before the Syrian regime's statements can be taken seriously, it must first clear itself in the ongoing United Nations investigation.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.